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A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

JOSEPH SMITH,

AND

THE DEVIL.

FROM NEW YORK HERALD 1844.

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A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE DEVIL

[Enter Devil with a bundle of handbills, which he is in the act of posting up.]

WANTED IMMEDIATELY!

All the liars, swindlers, thieves, robbers, incendiaries, murderers, cheats, adulterers, harlots, blackguards, gamblers, bogus makers idlers, busy-bodies, pickpockets, vagabonds, filthy persons, hireling clergy and their followers and all other infidels and rebellious, disorderly persons, for a crusade against Joe. Smith and the Mormons! Be quick, be quick, I say, or our cause will be ruined and our kingdom overthrown by that d——d fool of an impostor and his associates, for even now all earth and hell is in a stew.

Joseph Smith happens to be passing, and hails his majesty:

Good morning, Mr. Devil, How now? You seem to be much engaged; what news have you got there?

DEVIL—Slipping his bills into his pocket with a low bow: Oh, good morning, Mr. Smith, hope you are well, sir. Why, I—I was just out on a little business in my line. Or, finally, to be candid, I was contriving a fair and honorable warfare against you and your imposition, wherein piety is outraged and religion greatly hindered in its useful course. For to be bold, sir—and I dispise anything underhanded—I must tell you to your face that you have made more trouble than all the ministers or people of my whole dominion have for ages past.

SMITH—Trouble! What trouble have I caused your majesty? I certainly have endeavered to treat you and all other persons in a friendly manner, even my worst enemies, and I always aim to fulfil the Mormon creed, and that is, to mind my own business exclusively. Why should this trouble you, Mr. Devil?

DEVIL—Ah, your own business, indeed! I know not what you may consider your business, it is so very complicated; but I know what you have done and what you are aiming to do. You have disturbed the quiet of Christendom, overthrown churches and societies; you have dared to call into question the truth and usefulness of old and established creeds, which have stood the test of ages, and have even caused tens of thousands to come out in open rebellion, not only against wholesome creeds, established forms and doctrines, well-approved and orthodox, but against some of the most pious, learned, exemplary and honorable clergy, whom both myself and all the world love, honor and esteem, and this is not all. But you are causing many persons to think who never thought before, and you would put the whole world a thinking, and then where will true religion and piety be? Alas! they have no place among men, for if men keep up such a terrible thinking and reasoning as they begin to do, since you commenced your business, as you call it, they never will continue to uphold the good old way in which they have jogged along for so many ages, and thus, Mr. Smith, you will

overthrow my kingdom and leave me not a foot of ground on earth and this is the very thing you aim at. But I, sir, have the boldness to oppose you by all the lawful means which I have in my power.

SMITH—Really, Mr. Devil, your majesty has of late become very pious. I think some of your Christian brethren have greatly misrepresented you. It is generally reported by them that you are opposed to religion. But—

DEVIL—It is false; there is not a more religious and pious being in the world than myself, not a being more liberal-minded. I am decidedly in favor of all creeds, systems and forms of Christianity, of whatever name or nature; so long as they leave out that abominable doctrine which caused me so much trouble in former times, and which, after slumbering for ages, you have again revived; I mean the direct communication with God, by new revelation. This is hateful, it is impious, it is directly opposed to all the divisions and branches of the Christian church; I never could bear it. And for this very cause I helped to bring to condign punishment all the prophets and apostles of old; for while they were suffered to live with this gift of revelation, they were always exposing and slandering me and all other good, pious men in exposing our deeds and purposes, which they called wicked, but we considered the height of zeal and piety; and when we killed them for these crimes of dreaming, prophesying, and vision-seeing, they raised the cry of persecution, and so with you miserable, deluded Mormons.

SMITH—Then, your most Christian Majesty is in favor of all other religions but this one, are you?

DEVIL—Certainly, I am fond of praying, singing, church-building, bell-ringing, going to meeting, preaching and withal. I have quite a missionary zeal. I like also long faces, long prayers, long robes and learned sermons; nothing suits me better than to see people who have been for a whole week oppressing their

neighbors, grinding the face of the poor, walking in pride and folly, and serving me with all their heart, I say nothing suits me better, Mr. Smith, than to see these people going to meeting on Sunday, with a long, religious face on, and to see them pay a portion of their ill-gotten gains for the support of a priest, while he and his hearers pray with doleful groans and awful faces, saying: "Lord, we have left undone the things we ought to have done, and done the things we ought not;" and then when service is ended, see them turn to their wickedness and pursue it greedily all the week, and the next Sabbath repeat the same things. Now, be candid, Mr. Smith, do you not see that these and all others, who have a form and deny the power, are my good Christian children, and that their religion is a help to any cause?

SMITH—Certainly, your reasoning is clear and obvious as to these hypocrites, but you would not be pleased with people getting converted either at camp meeting or somewhere else, and then putting their trust in that conversion, and in free grace to save them—would you not be opposed to this?

DEVIL—Why should I have any objection to that kind of religion, Mr. Smith? I care not how much they get converted, nor how much they cry Lord! Lord, nor how much they trust to free grace to save them, so long as they do not do the works that their God has commanded of them. I am sure of them at last, for you know all men are to be judged according to their deeds. What does their good old Bible say? Does it not say, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into my kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." No, no, Mr. Smith, I am not an enemy to religion; and especially to the modern forms of Christianity, so long as they deny the power, they are a help to my cause; see how much discord, division, hatred, envy, strife, lying, contention, blindness, and even error and bloodshed has been produced as the effect of these very systems. By these

means I gain millions to my dominion, while at the same time we enjoy the credit of being pious Christians; but you, Mr. Smith, are my enemy, my open and avowed enemy; you have dared, in a sacrilegious manner, to tear the veil from all these fine systems, and commence an attack upon my kingdom, and this even, when I had almost all Christendom, together with the clergy and gentlemen of the press in my favor. How dare you venture thus to commence a revolution, without reverse, and without aid or succor and in the midst of innumerable hosts of my subjects?

SMITH—Why, sir, in the first place, I knew that I had the truth on my side, and that your systems and forms of Christianity were so manifestly corrupt that one had only to lift the vail from your fooleries on one side and to present plain and reasonable truth on the other, and the eyes of the people could at once distinguish the difference so clearly that except they choose darkness rather than light, they would leave your ranks and come over to the truth. For instance, what is easier than to show from a history of the past that a religion of direct revelation was the only system ever instituted by the Lord, and the only one calculated to benefit mankind? What is easier than to show that this system saved the church from flood, famine, flames, wars, division, bondage, doubt and darkness, many times, and that is the legitimate way and manner of God's government of His own peculiar people in all ages and dispensations.

DEVIL—To be candid with you, Mr. Smith, I must own that you have now said what neither myself nor my most able ministers have been able to gainsay by any argument or fact. But then you must recollect that tradition and custom, together with fashion and popular clamor, have in all ages had more effect than plain fact and sound reason. Hence, you see, we are yet safe so long as we continue to cry from press and pulpit, and in Sunday schools, that all these things are done away and no longer needed. In this

way, though God may speak, they will not hear; angels may minister, and they will not believe, visions may reveal, and they will not be enlightened; prophets may lift their voice, and their warnings pass unheeded; so you see we still have them as safe as we had the people in olden time. God can communicate no message to them which will be examined or heard with any degree of credence or candor. So, for all the good they get from God, all communication being cut off, they might as well be without a God. Thus, you see, I have full influence and control of the multitude by a means far more effectual than argument or reason, and I even teach them that it is a sin to reason, think or investigate, as it would disturb the even tenor of their pious breathings and devout groans and responses. Smith, you must be extremely ignorant of human nature, as well as of the history of the past, to presume that reason and truth would have much effect with the multitude. Why, sir, look how effectually we warded off the truth at Ephesus when Paul attempted to address them in the theatre. Strange that with al these examples before you, you should venture to raise the hue and cry which has so often been defeated, and this with no better weapons on your side than reason and truth. Indeed you may thank my Christian spirit of forbearance that you have escaped so far without a gridiron; but take care for the future, I may not always be so mild.

SMITH—But why is your majesty so highly excited against me and my plans of operation, seeing that you consider that you have the multitude perfectly safe; and why so enraged and fearful of the consequences of my course, and the effect of my weapons, while at the same time you profess to despise them as weak and powerless? Alas, it is too true that you have the multitnde safe, to all appearance, at present, and that truth can seldom reach them; why not then, be content and leave me to pursue my calling in peace? I can hardly hope to win to the cause of truth any but the few who think,

and these have ever been troublesome to your cause.

DEVIL—True, but then you are, in spite of all my efforts and that of my fellows, daily thinning our ranks by adding to the number of those who think, and such a thinking is kept up that we are often exposed in some of our most prominent plans, and are placed in an awkward predicament, and who knows what defeat, disgrace and dishonor may befall the pious cause if you are suffeded to continue your rebellious cause.

SMITH—But, Mr. Devil, why, with all the advantages on your side, do you resort to such mean, weak and silly fabrications as the Spaulding story? You profess to be a gentleman, a Christian and a clergyman, and you ought, for your own sake, and for the sake of your cause, to keep up outward appearances of honor and fairness. And now, Mr. Devil, tell the truth for once; you know perfectly well that your Spaulding Story, in which you represent me as an impostor, in connection with Sidney Rigdon, and that we were engaged in palming Solomon Spaulding's romance upon the world as the Book of Mormon, is a lie, a base fabrication, without a shadow of truth, and you know that I found the original records of the Nephites, and translated and published the Book of Mormon from them, without ever having heard of the existence of Spaulding or his romance, or of Sidney Rigdon either. Now, Mr. Devil, this was a mean, disgraceful trick in you, and one of which you have reason to be ashamed.

DEVIL—Well, Mr. Smith, to be candid, I acknowledge that what you say is true, and that it was not the most honorable course in the world. But it was you who commenced the war, by publishing that terrible book which we readily recognized as a complete expose of all our false and corrupt christianty, not even keeping back the fact that we had continued through the dark ages, to rob the Scriptures of their plainness, and we felt the utmost alarm and excitement, and without much reflection, in the height of passion, we called a hasty council of the clergy and editors, and other rascals

in Plainesville, Ohio, and thinking that almost any means was lawful in war, invented the Spaulding story, and fathered it upon the poor printer, Howe, of Plainesvill, although Dr. Hulbert, thanks to my aid, was its real author. But, Mr. Smith, mark one thing, we had not the face so hard, nor a conscience so abandoned, as to publish this Spaulding story at the first as a positive fact; we only published it as a conjecture, a mere possibility, and this you know we had a right to do; without once thinking of the amount of evil it would eventually accomplish. But, sir, it was some of the unfortunate clergymen who more reckless, hard and unprincipled than myself, have ventured to add to each addition of this story, till at last, without my aid or consent, they have set it down for a positive fact that Solomon Spaulding, Sidney Rigdon and yourself, have made up the Book of Mormon out of a romance. Now, Mr. Smith, I am glad of this interview with you, as it gives me the opportunity of clearing my character. I acknowledge with shame that I was guilty of a mean act in helping to hatch up and publish the Spaulding story as a probability, and that I associated with the rascals so far beneath my dignity, either as a soverign prince or a religious minister, or even an old, honorable and experienced Devil, and for this I beg your pardon. But really, I must deny the charge of having assisted in making the additions which have appeared in the late editions of that story, in which my former probabilities and mean conjectures are set down for positive facts. No, Mr. Smith. I had no hand in a trick so low and mean; I dispise it—as a work of priests and editors alone, without my aid or suggestion, and I do not believe that even the meanest young devil in our dominion would have stooped to such an act.

SMITH—Well I must give your majesty some credit for once at least, if what you say is true, but how can you justify your conduct in dishonoring yourself so far as to stoop to the level of Hireling clergy and their followers, in still making use of this humbug story

which you affect to despise, in order to still blind the eyes of the people in regard to the origin of the Book of Mormon?

DEVIL.—Oh! Mr Smith, it does take so readily among the pious of all sects that it seems a pity to spoil the fun, and I cannot resist the temptation of carrying out the joke, now it is so well rooted in their minds. And you cannot think how we devils shake our sides with laughter when we get up in the ga lery of some fine church, put on our long face, assist in singing, and in the devout responses; this done, the Spaulding story is gravely told from the pulpit, while the pious old clergyman wears a face as long as that of Balaam's beast. All is swallowed down for solid truth by the gaping multitude, while we bang our heads behind the screen and laugh and wink at each other in silence, as any thing overheard would disturb their worship, and, as bad as I am, I never wish to disturb those popular modes of worship, which decency requires us to respect. So, you see, Mr. Smith, we have our fun at your expense; but, after all, we do not mean any harm by it, although I must acknowledge, upon the whole, it serves our purpose.

SMITH—Well, we will drop this subject, as I want to inquire about some of your other stories which have had an extensive circulation by means of your editors and priests. For instance, there is the story of my attempting to walk upon the water and getting drowned; the numerous stories of my raising the dead as a mere trick of imposition, and getting detected in it; and the stories of my attempting to appear as an angel, and getting caught and exposed in the same; and besides this, you have me killed by some means every little while. Now, you old hypocrite, you know that none of these things ever happened, or any circumstance out of which to make them; and that so far from this I deny the principle of a man's working miracles, if wrought at all, were wrought for benevolent purposes, and without being designed to convince the unbeliever. Why, then, do you resort to such silly stories in your opposition to

me, seeing that you have so many other advantages? Not that I would complain of such weak opposition, as if it were calculated to hinder my progress, but rather to mention it as something well calculated to injure your own cause, by betraying your weakness, folly and meanness.

DEVIL—Ha, ha, ha, eh, he! Oh, Mr. Smith, I just put out these stories for a joke, in order to have my own fun, and without the most distinct idea that any being on earth would be so silly as to give any credence to them; but judge my surprise and joy when I found priests, editors and people so depraved in their judgement and tastes, and in love with lies, and so ready to catch at everything against their common enemy, as they call you, that those jocose stories of ours actually took in their credulous craniums for grave truths, and were passed about by them and sought after and swallowed by the multitude as greedily as a young robin swallows a worm when it is dropped into its mouth, which is stretched at full width, while its eyes are closed. So you see, Mr. Smith, that without meaning any particular harm to you, I have had my fun, and am, besides, so unexpectedly fortunate as to reap great advantages from circumstances where I neither expected or calaulated. So I hope you will at least bear my folly, nor set down aught in malice where no malice was intended. You know we devils are poor, miserable creatures at best, and were it not for our fun, and our gambling, and our religious exercises, we would have nothing to kill time.

SMITH—Well, I see plainly you will have to creep out somehow or other, rather than bear the disgrace and stigma which your conduct would seem to deserve. But forgetting the past, let me enquire what course you intend in the future, and whether this warfare between you and me will still be prosecuted? And if so, what course do you intend to persue hereafter? You know my course. I have long since taken the field at the head of a handful

pear as much larger than the reality as you have heretofore fallen short. If my former course has excited contempt and caused you to be despised and thus kept you out of notice, my future course will be to excite jealousy, fear and alarm, till all the world is ready to rise and crush you as if you were a legion of Sampsons, commanded by Bonapart. This, I think, will be more successful in putting you down than the ignoble course I have heretofore taken; to prepare for the worst.

SMITH—I care as little for your magnifying powers as I have heretefore done for your contempt; in fact, I will endeavor to go ahead to that degree that what you will say in regard to my great influence and power, though intended by you for falsehood, shall prove to be true, and by so doing I shall be prepared to receive those whom you may excite against me, and to give them so warm a reception that they will never discover your intended falsehood, but will find all your representations of my greatness to be a reality. So do your worst. I defy you.

DEVIL—Well, time will tell whether the earth is going to be governed by a prophet and under the sway of truth, or whether myself and my Christian friends will still prevail; but remember, I beseech you, for your own good, beware what you are doing. I have the priests and editors, with a few exceptions, under my control, together with wealth, popularity and honor. Count well the cost before you again plunge into this warfare. Good-by, Mr. Smith, I must be away to raise my recruits and prepare for a campaign.

SMITH—Good-by to your majesty.

(They both touch hats and turn away)

DEVIL—(recollecting himself and suddenly turning back) O! say Mr. Smith, one word more if you please, (in a low and confidential tone with his mouth to his ear) after all, what is the use of parting as enemies; the fact is, you go for the wheat and I for the tares. Both must be harvested; are we not fellow-laborers? I can make

no use for the wheat, nor you for the tares even if we had them; we each claim our own, I for the burning, you for the barn. Come, then, give the poor old Devil his due, and let's be friends.

SMITH—Agreed; I neither want yours, nor you mine; a man free from prejudice will give the Devil his due. Come, here is the right hand of fellowship, you to the tares and I to the wheat. (They shake hands cordially)

DEVIL—Well, Mr. Smith, we have talked a long while and are agreed at last; you are a noble and generous fellow, and would not bring a railing accusation against even a poor old Devil, nor cheat him of one cent. Come, it is a warm day, and I feel as though it is my treat. Let us go down to Mammy Brewer's cellar and take something to drink.

SMITH—Agreed, Mr. Devil, you appear very generous now.

(They enter the cellar together.)

DEVIL—Good morning, Mrs. Brewer, I make you acquainted with my friend, Mr. Smith, the prophet.

LANDLADY—Why, Mr. Devil, is that you? Sit down, you're tired: but you don't say that this is Mr. Smith, your mortal enemy? I am quite surprised. What will you have, gentlemen, for if you can drink together, I think all the world ought to be friends?

DEVIL—As we are both temperance men, and ministers, I think perhaps a glass of spruce beer apiece will be all right; what do you say, Mr. Smith?

SMITH—As you please, your majesty. (They take the beer.)

DEVIL—(Holding up glass)—Come, Mr. Smith, your health; I propose we offer a toast.

SMITH—Well, proceed.

DEVIL—Here's to my good friend, Joe, Smith; may all sorts of ill luck befall him, and may he never be suffered to enter my kingdom, either in time or eternity, for he would almost make me forget that I am a devil, and make a gentleman of me, while he

gently overthrows my government at the same time that he wins my friendship.

SMITH—Here's to his Satanic Majesty; may he be driven from the earth, and forced to put to sea in a stone canoe with an iron paddle; may the canoe sink, and a shark swallow the canoe and its royal freight, and an alligafor swallow the shark, and may the alligator be bound in the northwest corner of hell, the door locked the key lost and a blind man hunting for it.

END.

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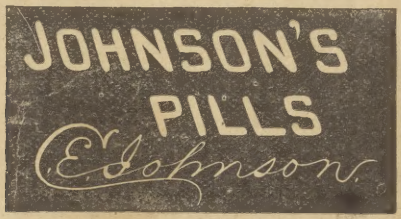

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